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Bard

Wild wind, brightness. The sun
has passed from copper
once valued by these Indians more than gold
to gold. They loved the red and blue,

hated yellow,
 define a nation
by its choice of primaries, how few
Euro flags show yellow

the rest of us are not too easy with the sun.
Which comes to us again
making cross-shaped refractions in the window screen mesh
Zuni symbol or something closer

the way we took those Indians as other
and killed them. Whereas they were ourselves
distorted by a different set of matter,

just matter. We belong to our colors.

27 June 2000
Cuttyhunk

if you live your whole life
among electrical devices
you become one yourself

in a power failure you go too
or just creep by on some
sluggish low drain default

until the sun
rises out of the socket again
and you can do.

Revive Matter. Be a materialist.
A little girl in a yellow pinafore
steps her silver little scooter up the hill.
To a view of the sea,
which belongs to all of us,
First Matter, motherwit and alphabet.

27 June 2000
Cuttyhunk

Powerless? The waves
are power, rush in
whiter than ever

creaming on every reef in the bight
splaying on the shore

All night we hear them
but even now at noon
they're loud enough
white enough, high enough

coming in hard
out of the sun haze
up Vineyard Sound from
freedom so near at hand,

the People's Republic of the Sea.

27 June 2000
Cuttyhunk

Being overboard and home
being home

the day
was an island
that began

powerless
except to leave

the long
conversation

and I had nothing to say to the sea

just more cheesy love poems

and the power was out
as if the island didn't have anything to say

o it all is leaving, it all is leaving

and in New Bedford the battery was dead,
but twenty five dollars and a sweet mechanic
my age in what he called an old red truck
but that was brown and grey, these
got us started so we could crawl
in heavy rainfall through heavy traffic

past King Philip's War and into Providence

and thus north to the pike into sunset
rainbow and mountain clouds
the shifty chamber music of the sky,

deer and delves and empty highways

we must have been doing something right (wrong)
to get us home so beautifully (with so much trouble)
on such roads. Vehicle rhymes with obstacle

the words end in the same lost key. Now sleep we go
and sleep late, the tide can take care of itself
and even though we've been gone two weeks
the sun still knows how to rise. (Home rhymes with ego.)

28 June 2000

Could this be summer?
Could the rapture
of resistant closure
complicate the seaside
reveries of Proust?
And that band of energies
he gently called *filles*
knowing that they come
down from heaven
to bless us with torment
enrapture us
with their passages
of quick going, their leaps
of pure staying?
Could they actually be girls?

Everybody thinks so once in a while
and then the tropics come
and make our night as long as our day
and we can choose
the busy mosquito hum of darkness where we dream
or the waking languor of a terrible hot silent day

most of us live in dream
the beautiful gizmos around us
mere garrison work
armor for our interminable
enterprise inside

we are the batteries on which they live
highflying gestures
projected on the stages of the ancient Roman theater,
arena in our heads, the knob of Calvary
rising bleak between the Shoulder Mountains.

28 June 2000

ENSAYOS

NEWS FROM TIBET

We learn from Dzog-Chen:

The codons
Are people.

28 June 2000

ENSAYOS

WHY MEDITATION IS NECESSARY

Millennia ago we migrated
Into the human form

We chose the best animal we could find
Fit more or less for our purposes

It's not perfect
Yoga meditation minimizes the imperfections of the body

Revises physiology
And puts us in control,

That is, Awareness of our original nature and condition.

28 June 2000

ENSAYOS

INSECTS

There the surf was all night music
here the katydids and the voices
of the permanent majority on this planet,

huge democracy in which I am permitted
with a few others of the mammal kind
by dint of size

it takes a long time for them to swallow us down.

28 June 2000

ENSAYOS

Are we mammals kept on earth
As food for insects?

Do they keep us as their hogs and sheep?
Are we Leviathan
And do they, the chosen ones, the multitudinous of earth,
Feed on us in accordance with scripture,

Do they keep us handy and fatten us,
So many of them so few of us,
And all their myriads feed on us.

So maybe human consciousness
Is an emergency-triggered thing
Whereby we try to rescue ourselves from them,
Occasional, fitful rebels against the vast majority of life?

Did the mammals breed humans
To lead them in the war against the insect hordes?

They can't kill us, despite rogue anopheles.
They need us for their food.

28 June 2000

LES AMANTS

Room for one more flyer in the sky fish
In the sea do you have room for me
In your little life you boundless charmer? All

The power in the universe could not manage
To wedge one more star into the sky.
Don't ask me to finish what your mother started.

29 June 2000

THE EXPLOIT

What pushes one over Niagara
is the suck of water
down, the arrant gravity
of the occasion, the fall

by which your barrel
temporarily takes leave
of anything you can count on
without for even a moment

abandoning the flow
while you flood into eternity
the same sure decent way
color floods the October leaf

that which sustains us
finally lets us fall, the crowd
looking on from the shore
adores you with indifferent eyes.

29 June 2000

Wine me rush to seize her
spilled as if atop a kirtle
or knot of air as tiles are slipped
over one another's shoulders we
imbricate the world with consciousness

over an underweening torpor
of sundazed rock, depends on who
we are in your theodicy, tradesman.
Your miracles are glib but glad
at least to find their mirrorer in me.

29 June 2000

Half-closed on lying rockshelf
glacier Rondout spilled a fever
hasty mosquito

o or I was above all that
armature in window
spilled only ever

because they in potteries a glaze
applied in season
'broccoli reddens'

midEaster transport rock
Roodt Eylandt from the clay
she masked a made

'blue devil contemplating Rome'
a hill of bites less shale for
timothy supper

dour nation of syllables
speak a cigarer, sparrow,
lean upon middle

a curried *Schimmel* pale
as death's own pony on
her way to college

battering at the club gate
tibia to template or groove
galliard weather

dance me douce me over
design your Rockies granitely
narrable vista

ginger from a stone jar pickled
pleases senatorial aspirants
by dint of savor

delicate hurt her heart's proclaimer
vexed in that mystic sauna
ashram in India

work hard and suck short views
be a vacation when the candle slides
slippery vector

in and out of the dark perdition
where one forgets the causes and conditions
sleep alongside me.

29 June 2000

ENSAYOS

THE NUCLEUS

A kind of Nagasaki moment
When the imaginable worst comes
Back again even worse than before
And the world is just something that hurts.

29 June 2000

I want the Pléiade
edition of the weather
the encyclopedia of everything
the thousand volumes of the History of Flowers
the never ending Annals of Desire.

29 June 2000
Red Hook

Suppose I am a candle.
What does that make you?

Or a curtain falling on a badly
written scene the audience
finds it hard to understand,

a tedious play in darkness
with an invisible heroine
whispering the awful truth,

aren't I the same as glass?
When the light goes out
does darkness come in different colors

different flavors? Or is the wind
always under new management?

We have read all the signs.
A moon appears

to last longer than I do.
And the world is raining.

A map is a piece of paper
from which the words have washed away.

If I had a small enough vocabulary
I could say everything, and say it right.

29 June 2000

DISJUNCTION AS A UNIFYING PRINCIPLE

Notes on any qasida, Quasha's Preverbs of Tell, and such enterprises — the subtle heresies of Zero Motivation.

No formal pressure. Language is arbitrary.

Or only language is arbitrary.

But no use of it is — every linguistic gesture we perform is motivated (totally, as they'd say) by all previous gestures we've made or had made round us.

So the goal of poetics is to rescue and restore the arbitrary.

But words press on one another, no matter what we do. Beneveniste deconstructs Saussure's arbitrariness of the sign.

No content pressure — language is formal.

Its formality is the angel of the arbitrary .

A prayer preys on itself, or on God.

A prayer, language tells us, is a throwing away, a casting up, out.

But prayer is an *-er* word, *nomen agentis*, marked by the sign of One-who-does-the-verb-in-question.

So the prayer itself is the doer of the praying. The one who 'says' the prayer is just a witness, and perhaps not the only one, of the praying praying, the pray-er enacting itself.

This tells us a little, perhaps more than we knew, about a line of poetry, and the one who 'says' it — speaks it in mind or writes it down on paper.

Give fire to the fire, said the great poet-chemist Michael Maier: Giving fire to the fire = putting language to language. Writing it down.

Abandon words to language. Then they will be clean. Let language talk for you — then you'll discover what you really mean.

Language knows better than you do.

Principle of the *lapsus freudianus*: what says itself, really says me.

29 June 2000

Be touched by it. Or swagger
down the cranberries. Birds
makes leaves move, micro-
adjustments in The Machine.
Chipmunks chase chipmunks,
mitochondria rewrite galaxies
inside. The principle of
Conservation of Consciousness
I declare, your serenity
wakes them up. You are enrolled
in the machine from the beginning.
Ignore me. I'm waiting
on line just like yourself.
Query: what if the posse of commuters
waiting on the corner had already
been picked up by the bus but never
noticed the transition moment,
never saw it, never remembered,
still think they're standing on the street?

30 June 2000

DEVIENS CE QUE TU ES

Become what you are, said the Lacoste ad,
a girl showing her belly button, to prove
in case we doubted from her sleek perfection
that she too is an exile, daughter of Eve.

30 June 2000

We read about Rehoboth, keep
It in mind. Learn to pronounce it,
old town, Massachusetts. Last
stand of Anawan, King Philip's chief.
Beheaded, quartered, the king.
Trapped, executed, the minister.
Big rock near Rehoboth. Learn to pronounce
judgment on the murderers,
the long shabby crime of history.
Or do I make too much of death?
Was there some entity I forgot
more important than living consciousness?
To cut that off is to cut everything.

30 June 2000

ENSAYOS

CAPITAL PUNISHMENT

You who send people to their deaths,
Know they will be waiting for you there
When your time comes. Are you prepared
For that conversation?

You are preparing
For an unavoidable journey
By sending your bitter enemies on ahead
To lie in wait for you
Along the only road there ever is.

30 June 2000

СТРАВИНСКИЙ

Somehow we don't hear him so much
these, our cynic airs
need to be dumber than he
would let us be, his sneer
we could live with but not his passion,
that lover's sarcasm
(he had loved everyone), his lyrical
despair. How could we
keep our footing there?

30 June 2000

One spot talks to another.
The other spot listens
and what it hears sinks in.

The spot is now a pore.
In this way the skin is made
that holds us in.

The Greeks
(who had no word for a living body)
called this Okeanos, the endless
beginningless ocean, river
that runs all round our world,
around everything that we experience.

Whatever and wherever it seems to be
We experience it inside. Our brains,
our hearts, the little city in the core of us.

So I send you a tourist postcard from it:
Inside my skin, listening hard.

30 June 2000

Adjustments of the diamond kind
a plea for grace

— it is balance, isn't it,
a blessing between source and destination,

a wave of giving
rolling over the trivial obstacles between.

Do you know how to eat rocks?
Only water, only salt.

The lordly carbon
deep inside the actual heart

the real blue diamond.

Answer.
Turn them into light. And then remember.

30 June 2000